with the new immigration guidelines "A Point-based System : Making Migration Work for Britain" and announced its implementation from 7th November, 2006. According to the new guidelines, for an extension of visa or for Indefinite Leave of Settlement, a person staying in the UK under HSMP has to earn 75 points. The revised rules require the applicants to re-qualify through a stringent points based system on the basis of his age, earnings and UK experience for their further visa extension as against economic activity alone when entered into the UK.

(b) and (c) The new HSMP rules are applicable to professionals from all countries who have migrated to the UK under the Programme. It is expected that the majority of migrants currently in the UK under the HSMP will qualify under the new point-based system. It has been informed by the Government of UK that transitional arrangements have been put in place to support those existing participants of the HSMP who will fail to satisfy the new points scoring assessment. The HSMP is designed to attract only highly skilled young people to the UK to seek and take work.

Review of functioning of Local Self Government

†2636. SHRI BRIJ BHUSHAN TIWARI:
SHRI BHAGWATI SINGH:

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have undertaken any assessment or review with regard to functioning of local self Governance bodies of the country during the last three years;

(b) if so, the State-wise details thereof;

(c) whether Government would enact any legislation to make Panchayati Raj Institutions empowered and public oriented; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Yes, Sir. The three-Volume "State of the Panchayats — A Mid Term Review and Appraisal" has been prepared and was placed on the Table of the House during Winter Session 2006. A brief summary is outlined below:

1. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj is an innovation of the UPA Government because no previous government has had a separate Ministry or even

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Department of Panchayati Raj. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj came into existence on 27th May, 2004, and within a month, Hon'ble Prime Minister called his very first Conference of Chief Ministers on 24th June 2004, on the subject "Rural Prosperity and Poverty Eradication through Panchayati Raj". While inaugurating the Conference, he spoke of Panchayati Raj being a medium to transform rural India into 700 million opportunities, of Gram Swaraj being the key instrument for integrating economic reforms with institutional reforms in the country side, the challenges of institutionalizing the system of local self-governance while also making it the world's most representative and participatory democracy. The first mandate of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj is to ensure conformity to the Constitutional provisions of Part IX of the Constitution read with Article 243 ZD of Part IXA relating to the District Planning Committees together with the Eleventh Schedule which sets out a list of 29 matters, to be considered by State Legislatures for devolution to the Panchayats. While the Ministry of Panchayati Raj must ensure conformity to these Constitutional provisions, the Constitution of India charges the States (not the Centre) with the responsibility for devolution. In other words, the processes and content of devolution of functions, finances and functionaries — the crux of Power to the Panchayats — are vested entirely in State Legislatures, reinforcing the inclusion of Panchayati Raj in the State List of the Seventh Schedule.

2. The first task before the Ministry was to evolve a national consensus in respect of the Roadmap for Panchayati Raj through mutual consultation between the Centre and the States. Ministry of Panchayati Raj convened Seven Round Tables of State Panchayati Raj Ministers with the Union Minister of Panchayati Raj between July and December 2004. The deliberations centered on the 18 identified dimensions of Panchayati Raj ranging from the effective Devolution of the Functions, Finances and Functionaries to District Planning, Training and Capacity Building and IT-enabled e-governance. At the conclusion of each Round Table, nearly 150 action points comprised in the Compendium were unanimously adopted by all Panchayati Raj Ministers and referred to State Governments/UTs for taking necessary action. This has become a National Roadmap for effective Panchayati Raj.

3. A Committee of Panchayati Raj Secretaries was constituted to monitor the progress and implementation of these 150 Action Points. This Committee of Secretaries headed by the Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati

Raj would also service the Council of Panchayati Raj Ministers. The Committee of Secretaries has held seven meetings. The Council of Ministers has been convened twice, at Kochi, Kerala in August, 2005 and at Bhubaneshwar, Orissa in June, 2006, respectively.

(b) State-wise details may be found in Vol. II of the Report.

(c) No, Sir. The Constitution vests the responsibility for Panchayati Raj in State Governments and it is the Ministry's intention to work with State Governments towards ensuring conformity with the Constitutional provisions in both letter and spirit.

(d) Does not arise.

Training in Panchayati Raj

2637. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA : Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has felt the need for more funds for capacity building and training in Panchayati Raj;

(b) if so, whether his Ministry has ever contemplated to get funds from United Nations Development Fund or the World Bank;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefore?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. Considering the number of elected representatives of Panchayti Raj Institutions in the country which are over 2.8 million, there is an urgent need for more funds for Capacity Building and Training of these representatives. The Ministry has formulated a National Capability Building Framework for providing face-to-face and satellite-based training. The Ministry is in the process of consultation with the Planning Commission for getting more plan funds during the remaining period of the 11th Five Year Plan as also with United Nations Development Fund for getting external assistance for implementation of certain components of the framework. Preliminary contacts with the World Bank have been established but these are still to take a formal shape.